STARTING A NURSING PROGRAM
Questions and Answers

Is any sort of accreditation needed?

Yes, the educational institution offering the program needs to be accredited as a post-secondary institution by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Three entities commonly accredit educational institutions that offer nursing programs:

- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)--North Central Association (NCA) is the regional accrediting agency for Arizona. NCA accredits full service public and private colleges and universities, as well as independent and vocational schools.
- Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) is a national accrediting body that accredits private independent and vocational schools.
- Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) is a national accrediting body accredits private career colleges and schools that offer health education programs

Does the program itself need to be accredited?

While the Board recognizes and encourages program accreditation by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Council (NLNAC) or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), this type of accreditation is not mandated for Board approval. However graduates from BSN programs that are not accredited are not accepted in most graduate programs.

What is the approval process?

There are three stages to the approval process required by Board administrative rules.

- A proposal to offer a program needs to be filed under A.A.C. R4-19-207. The proposal establishes the intent to conduct a nursing program and reviews some of the requirements to ensure you are eligible to apply. The Education Committee, composed of nursing educators and nurses in practice, reviews all proposals and makes a recommendation regarding approval to the Board. The Board will make a decision about the proposal at their next regularly scheduled meeting after the Education Committee meeting.
- If the Board approves the proposal, the program may then apply for provisional approval, the second step in the process. Provisional approval involves the submission of a self-study by the educational institution and a site visit by Board staff to verify, clarify and amplify the contents of the self-study. The same review process by the Education Advisory Committee and the Board is conducted with this application. When Board grants provisional approval, the program may offer nursing classes and clinical instruction. Provisional approval may be granted with contingencies. If that is the case, all contingencies must be met before offering any part of the program. The program must admit a class within 12 months of receiving provisional approval. All provisionally approved programs must submit a report 12 months after the admission of students and will receive a site visit to verify compliance with regulations.
- After and within 2 years of graduating the first class, the program shall apply for full approval under R4-19-208. The application process is the same as for provisional approval. Failure to apply for full approval within the specified time period will cause your provisional approval to be rescinded.

What are the Board standards for program approval?

The Board standards for program approval are found in the Nurse Practice Act Rules of the Board. Article 2 of the Board administrative rules contains the rules for approved programs in Arizona.

A.A.C. R4-19-207 contains the rules for the proposal and provisional applications and R4-19-208 contains the rules for full approval application.

When does the Education Committee and the Board meet?
The Board meets every other month on odd months, usually during the third week of the month. The Education Committee usually meets on a Friday during the even months. For exact dates and times, please review the Board website for the schedule.

Where do I start?
If the school is not accredited, accreditation should be obtained before the application process is begun.

Please take a moment to review the policy on: Process / Progression of New Program Approvals

Should you have any questions don't hesitate to contact us.